

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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WASHINGTON FOR NMFS, NOAA, USDOC

COPENHAGEN FOR REGIONAL FISHERIES ATTACHE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIS, EAID, MT, LY

SUBJECT: MALTA/LIBYA FISHERIES AGREEMENT

REF: A) TRIPOLI 1049, B) VALLETTA 2366 (NOTAL)

- C) STATE 188616, D) TRIPOLI 0993 (NOTAL).

1. AS REQUESTED REF C, FOLLOWING IS ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE MALTA/LIBYA FISHERIES AGREEMENT.

2. THE SUBJECT OF A JOINT MALTESE/LIBYAN FISHERIES COOPERATIVE FIRST AROSE IN APRIL 1977, WHEN PRIME MINISTER MINTOFF ANNOUNCED THAT THE KUWAIT FUND FOR ARAB ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HAD AGREED TO FINANCE A FEASIBILITY STUDY ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRAWLER FLEET TO FISH IN MALTESE TERRITORIAL WATERS. SEVENTY THOUSAND KUWAITI DINARS (\$250,000) WAS MADE AVAILABLE FOR THIS STUDY AND ANOTHER KUWAITI-FINANCED STUDY ON A SEWAGE PURIFICATION PROJECT. THE FISHERIES STUDY WAS CONDUCTED BY THE FOOD AND

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AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION WHICH, ALONG WITH THE NORTH KOREANS, SPANISH, AND THE ITALIANS, HAD BEEN PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT TO THE MALTESE. A KUWAITI DELEGATION VISITED MALTA IN DECEMBER, 1977 TO FORMALIZE PLANS FOR THE PROJECT. THE SUBJECT WAS ALSO DISCUSSED DURING MINTOFF'S VISIT TO KUWAIT IN LATE MARCH 1978. IN LATE APRIL THE GOM AND THE GOK

SIGNED AN AGREEMENT WHEREBY THE KUWAIT FUND WOULD LOAN THE GOM 1.2 MILLION KUWAITI DINARS (ABOUT \$4.4 MILLION) TO FINANCE THE CONSTRUCTION OF EIGHT TRAWLERS. MALTA DRYDOCKS WILL REPORTEDLY HAVE THE "RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL" ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TRAWLERS.

3. IN DECEMBER, 1977, MINTOFF ANNOUNCED THAT PLANS WERE PROCEEDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT FISHERIES COOPERATIVE WITH LIBYA, TO BE KNOWN AS "STAD U STAGHN" (MALTESE FOR "FISH AND GET RICH"). THE PRIME MINISTER TOLD THE MALTESE PARLIAMENT ON MAY 17 THAT LIBYA HAD AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO MATCH THE APPROXIMATELY \$4.4 MILLION SOFT LOAN FROM THE KUWAITIS AND THAT A JOINT COMPANY WOULD BE SET UP, MOST LIKELY ON A 50/50 BASIS, TO FISH IN LIBYAN AND MALTESE TERRITORIAL WATERS. REPORTEDLY HALF THE CATCHES WOULD BE SOLD IN MALTA. LIBYA COULD PROVIDE HALF THE MANPOWER FOR THE TRAWLER CREWS, BUT MINTOFF STATED THAT THEY WOULD PROBABLY NOT DO SO. AGAIN THE MALTA DRYDOCKS WOULD HAVE RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL CONCERNING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TRAWLERS. A NUMBER OF TRAWLERS WILL REPORTEDLY BE LEASED UNTIL THE TRAWLERS TO BE FINANCED BY LIBYA CAN BE CONSTRUCTED.

4. WE HAVE NOT YET SEEN THE ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT OF THE NEW STAD U STAGHN COMPANY THAT MINISTER CREMONA SIGNED IN TRIPOLI (REF D). SUCH AGREEMENTS (LIKE THE RECENT UNCLASSIFIED

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ESTABLISHMENT OF BAHHAR U SEWWI, ENGLISH EQUIVALENT "SAIL AND SEW") ARE SOMETIMES PUT ON THE TABLE OF THE MALTA PARLIAMENT BUT THIS AGREEMENT WAS NOT, AND PARLIAMENT HAS NOW RECESSED UNTIL OCTOBER 16.

5. IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, ON JULY 18, THE MALTESE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES APPROVED A BILL AMENDING MALTA'S TERRITORIAL WATERS AND CONTIGUOUS ZONE ACT OF 1971 WHICH, AMONG OTHER THINGS, PROVIDES THAT MALTA WILL EXERCISE FISHING RIGHTS IN A ZONE 25 NAUTICAL MILES AROUND MALTA (AS AGAINST 20 NAUTICAL MILES AS AT PRESENT). MALTA'S TERRITORIAL WATERS WERE EXTENDED FROM SIX TO TWELVE NAUTICAL MILES BY THE SAME BILL. THE TEXT OF THIS ACT WILL BE FORWARDED TO WASHINGTON UNDER COVER OF AN AIRGRAM.

6. FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE STATUS OF THE FISHERIES INDUSTRY IN MALTA, THE NMFS MAY WISH TO REVIEW THE REPORT ON THE ABOVE-MENTIONED SUBJECT WHICH WAS FORWARDED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S OFFICE OF FISHERIES AFFAIRS IN NOVEMBER, 1977. LAINGEN

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